

## P.C.C. comes together again



Warden Randy Pfister stands near the gifts purchased for 100 children for the Salvation Army through the Angel Tree program at PCC. (Photo by Cynthia Grau)

By **Cynthia Grau**

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Pontiac, Ill.--Staff and employees at the Pontiac Correctional Center have come together again to provide Christmas gifts for underprivileged children.

The Angel Tree, which has been a constant program for more than 20 years at the prison, is an opportunity for employees to give back to the community by getting gifts for children through the Salvation Army in Pontiac.

Mary Eggelston and Michele Pierce, co-chairs for the event, said they served about 100 children this year, as they have for the past few years. The pair said there was a concern with the numbers requested, especially after the events of the last few months.

“We’ve had a few significant events with staff here and the staff here has been very generous, as far as taking care of our coworkers first. It was a little concerning whether we were going to be able to cover the same amount this year, but they all pulled through,” Eggelston said, alluding to the recent tornadoes, which claimed the homes of two employees.

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**Michele Pierce, left, and Mary Eggelston, survey two of the many gifts PCC employees purchased for the annual Angel Tree. (Photo by Cynthia Grau)**

If they so chose, employees were able to choose an angel, which has a name, age and gender of a child for which to purchase a gift, and could decide how many and what kinds of gifts to buy.

“They are very giving,” Pierce said of the employees. “There were a couple ladies who each took three names and they had their kids go with them to help choose the gifts. They can grab as many as they want, and there are people who do that. They are so clever. There are backpacks out there with the gifts inside. For a nine-year-old, they probably need a new backpack by this time in the year.”

Bicycles and wrapped gaming systems and many random items were surrounding the large tree in the entryway of the building. The trio said the gifts really run a complete spectrum of possibilities, from clothing to Playstations.

Warden Randy Pfister said it’s pretty amazing to see all the good work coming from the more than 700 employees he works with at the prison.

“I’m proud of my staff, without a doubt. And this is all the time. Everyone reaches out and takes care of each other,” Pfister said.

Along with the Angel Tree, employees are even donating coats to the Salvation Army, as well as food for the Livingston County Community Pantry.

Erika Howard, who has been in charge of collecting the coats, said that one trip has already been made to deliver coats, gloves, hats, snow suits and the like, and her best guess is more than 100 of those combined items have been collected, with more being dropped off daily.

“I would like to be able to increase the number of children we buy for next year, but again, this year, we just had a lot going on. We just wanted to make sure we could cover what we had, rather than take on too much,” Eggelston said.